

**Presbyterian Patriots: The Historical Context of
the Shared History and Prevalent Ideologies of
Delaware's Ulster-Scots who took up arms in the
American Revolution.**

**A Monograph
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Abstract

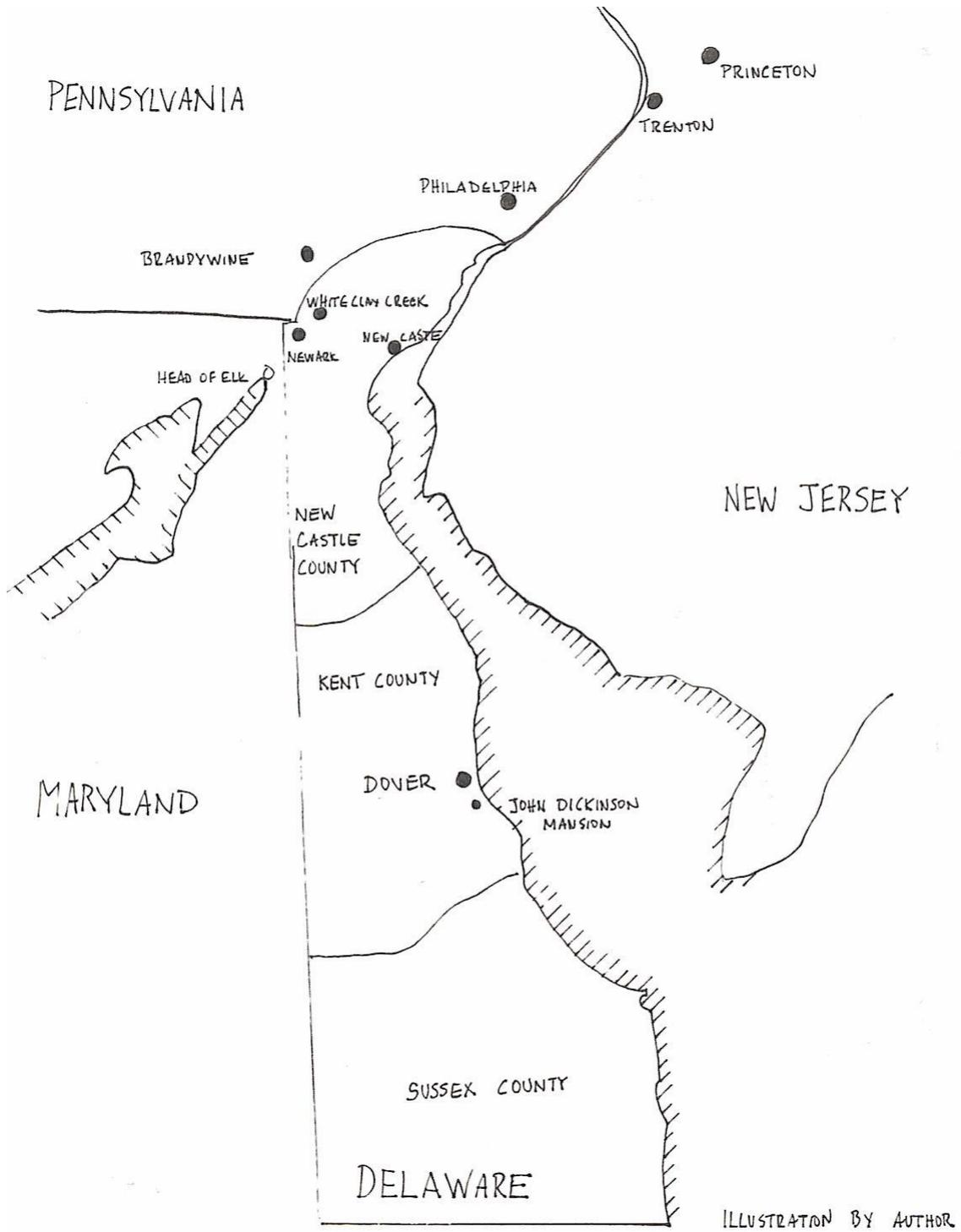
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This monograph examines the phenomenon of the disproportionate volunteerism of members of Delaware's Presbyterian Ulster-Scot community in the sole Regiment from Delaware to join the Continental Army. It posits Ulster-Scots, a minority group in Delaware's general population, represented a majority of the officer corps in Continental Regiment for two main reasons: shared cultural history of tyranny by the British, and an ideology that supported the concept of rebellion. This ideology was formed through the two main philosophies that were critical to the founding of the new American government: republicanism and liberalism. Both of these ideologies supported and justified rebelling in philosophical terms, and supported their cultural antagonism to the British. Using Captain Robert Kirkwood, Jr. as a representative Presbyterian officer in the Regiment, this monograph asserts that the members of the Regiment came to know republican and liberal ideological perspectives as a result of two related venues: universities and churches. As a result of a schism in the Presbyterian Church in the Delaware/Pennsylvania/New Jersey area in the mid-eighteenth century, universities formed along schism lines that championed either republicanism or liberalism. Due to the integrated nature of the Presbyterian Churches in New Castle County, Delaware, congregations were exposed to the teachings of ministers on both sides of the schism who subscribed to republican or liberal tenets espoused in the universities. As members of those Presbyterian congregations, the members of the Continental Regiment would have been exposed to, understood, and internalized the main concepts of republicanism and liberalism. These two aspects add context to the Regiment's motivation to fight, and provide lessons for modern military planners concerning combat planning and post-conflict governance by offering an example of the fidelity required for "cultural understanding" of opposing forces.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Map of Revolution-Era Delaware and Surrounding Areas.....	v
Introduction.....	1
The Delaware Continental Regiment: The Rise of the Ulster-Scots in New Castle County.....	8
The Shared History of Delaware’s Scottish Presbyterians: Predisposed to fight the British.....	13
Old Side Republicans vs. New Side Liberals.....	21
Conclusion.....	36
APPENDIX A: Definition of Republicanism.....	43
APPENDIX B: Definition of Liberalism.....	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	46

Map of Revolution-era Delaware and Surrounding Areas



Introduction

This monograph topic grew out of a professional interest in the American Revolution, political philosophy, and history in general. However, during the research phase of its writing, the topic also began to weave threads through my personal life experience growing up in Delaware, with almost all of the connections discovered by happy accident. I was raised in a development located off of the Kirkwood Highway called Meeting House Hill, just a few short miles from both the University of Delaware and the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church. The neighborhood of Meeting House Hill, supposedly located near the site of the original White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church (before relocating to its current location, only about two miles away, making the original church a meeting house), has many streets named after Delaware militia members from the Brandywine Hundred and White Clay Creek Hundred, but two streets always stood out to me as oddly named. I did not understand the significance of those oddly named streets—Old Side Court and New Side Court, until my research on this monograph was complete.

I also did not understand or appreciate the history of the main road that we lived off of—the Kirkwood Highway. The road’s namesake, Robert Kirkwood, Jr., lived in a lot adjacent to the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church—a church whose present address is on the Kirkwood Highway.¹ The highway leads into the town of Newark, home of the University of Delaware, originally called the Newark Academy. Robert attended this school, most probably because his church pastor was at once the pastor of the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church (where Robert Kirkwood, Sr. worked) and the President

¹ Letter from Daniel Kirkwood to Dr. Lewis P. Bush, dated July 14, 1876. This letter is found in *The Journal and Order Book of Captain Robert Kirkwood* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1910), 4.

of the Newark Academy. As a fellow alum of this school, I became interested to know more about Robert Kirkwood, Jr. What I found out, partially from his own writings, is that Kirkwood's experience as a member of the Presbyterian Church in New Castle County, Delaware, and as a college-educated soldier and officer, made him an excellent example for demonstrating the political philosophies and ideologies were most prevalent at this time and place in American history. As Kirkwood is a good representative example of political ideologies that existed within the turmoil of Presbyterian politics, he is also an excellent representative figure for those same ideologies that would have been prevalent within the Delaware Continental Regiment. As a member of the predominant religious group found within the Regiment, and as an officer that served the entire duration of the American Revolution in that Regiment, Robert Kirkwood, Jr.'s experience tells us something not only about political thought in New Castle County, Delaware, but about the foundational ideologies of the United States of America. With a focus on the life of Kirkwood and the times of the Delaware Regiment, this monograph aims at providing context to the actions of those Delaware Patriots who took up arms against the British in the American War of Independence, and asks if there are lessons that can transcend time and circumstance that might be applicable in today's military challenges.

Initial research began as an inquiry into only the ideological motivations of the Delaware revolutionaries. As research progressed, it became evident that ideology alone is insufficient for action, contrary to the thoughts of ideological historian Bernard Bailyn, who espoused ideology as the primary motivator in the Revolution.² However, commonly understood cultural history

² See Bernard Bailyn's foreword to *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1967) for his explanation of his idealistic interpretation of the Revolution. The limits of Bailyn's views are explored by Gordon Wood in his article *A Pluralistic Conception*, in Greene's *The Ambiguity of the American Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), which argues that Bailyn's views are a good point of departure for a new look at the social sources of the Revolution.

coupled with ideology creates behavior.³ Ideology, it seems, is a catalyst for action, but seldom a prime reason for action, as in a vacuum. Therefore, an inquiry into the motivation for action must include not only ideology, but also an historical context to that ideology.

In the case of the colonial revolutionaries from Delaware, it quickly becomes apparent that the ideological and historical underpinnings of the era are inextricably interwoven with the Ulster-Scots (also termed “Scotch-Irish”) and Scottish Presbyterian immigrants. Of a population of approximately 22 percent of Scot or Irish heritage in Delaware, roughly 58 percent of the officers in the Continental Regiment were of Scottish or Irish descent.⁴ So who were these “Scotch-Irish Presbyterians”? In his book *The People With No Name*, Patrick Griffin makes the convincing case that one of the few things that most Scotch-Irish could most likely agree upon is that they do not like the term “Scotch-Irish”, as this tended to blur their true cultural heritage.⁵ Therefore, this monograph will refer to those who immigrated to the American colonies of Scottish heritage either as Scots (who directly emigrated from Scotland) or Ulster-Scots (Ulster being the region of Ireland populated by large numbers of Scots prior to their immigration to

³ Alan Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 23. Gibson is citing Gordon Wood, who discusses the concept that language of the culture of the time, along with ideology, creates behavior. Therefore, it is inferred by the author of this monograph that, based on Wood’s reasoning, that a common language of culture, which must be rooted in a common history coupled with ideology, are motivators for action.

⁴ Statistics on Scottish and Irish surnames in the census of 1790, compiled by Purvis and conveyed in David Hackett Fischer’s *Albion Seed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) show a total of 21.8 percent Scots or Irish surnames in Delaware. Since immigration virtually ceased at the start of the Revolution, we can conclude that the 1790 census is adequately representative of the population in 1776. Data concerning the names of Delaware Regiment members was compiled from Ralph Nelson, Historian for the Delaware Society SAR (1997-2006) and Michael Gallagher, Historian for the Kirkwood Chapter DESSAR, in their article “The Real Story of the American Revolution: History of the (First) Delaware Regiment.” <http://www.rsar.org/military/derghist.htm> (accessed 5 November 2008). The origins of the Regimental Officers surnames was checked amongst three sources: <http://ancestry.com>, <http://surnames.behingthename.com>, and genealogical information found in Peden’s *Revolutionary Patriots of Delaware* (1996). The remainder of the surname origins of the officers was as follows: Welsh 6%, German 2%, and English 28%, Unknown 2%. The percentages are approximate, given the considerable overlap in the name origins. Of those in the “English” category, several had a lineage identified as “borderlands”, which could have been either English or Scottish, but in this case, in order to maintain a conservative figure, the author chose to identify those Officers as having English surnames.

⁵ Patrick Griffin, *The People With No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 2. This sentiment is also expressed in George Fraser Black’s *Scotland's Mark on America* (New York: BiblioBazaar, 2006), 17. Black makes the point that “Ulster Scot” is preferred instead of “Scotch-Irish” because, as the late Whitelaw Reid once said, it does not confuse the race with the accident of birth. Griffin also points out that the term “Scotch-Irish” was often thought to mean “Irish”, which implied Roman Catholic, and no self-respecting Ulster Scot Presbyterian would ever want to be accused of such a heinous thing.

America). With a relatively small proportion within the general population as compared to the disproportionately large representation in the Continental Regiment, the question must be asked: why did so many Ulster-Scots volunteer to fight the British? This paper will argue that Ulster-Scots joined in the numbers that they did as a result of two key factors: a common cultural history of oppression, and ideologies that developed among the Ulster Scot/Scottish Presbyterians of the day that provided philosophical justification to fight the British. These ideologies developed from factional fighting within the Presbyterian Church in the Delaware/Pennsylvania/New Jersey area, and produced some of the foundational political ideas in American government.

Historians have argued for centuries about the role of ideology in the American Revolution, and about which schools of thought tended to predominate the thinking of the Nation's Founders—the very ideologies that were “in the air” among the people who took up arms in Delaware's Continental Regiment.⁶ Three contemporary schools of thought, classical republicanism, liberalism, and the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment (as presented in this monograph as influential to the republicanism/liberalism debate) all had strong currents that ran through the primary defining institution of Delaware's Ulster Scots and Scots: the Presbyterian Church.⁷

Proponents of classical republicanism (such as Gordon Wood and J.G.A. Pocock) saw in early America a classic republican culture that emphasized concepts of virtue, corruption (as the nemesis of virtue), and the public good rather than private rights and profit making.⁸ This

⁶ The phrase “in the air” is used by Alan Gibson in *Interpreting the Founding* (14) to describe concepts in common parlance. In context, Gibson states that “...scholars... (debate) about whether the founders should be thought of as philosophical Statesmen who reflectively adopted Lockean ideas or whether they instinctively adopted ideas that were simply “in the air” in colonial and revolutionary America...”

⁷ For definitions of classical republicanism and classical liberalism, see Appendix A: Definition of Republicanism, and Appendix B: Definition of Liberalism.

⁸ Gordon Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 98. As classical republicanism harkens back to Greek and Roman ideals associated with virtue and subversion of self for the greater good, J. G. A. Pocock's work sought a slightly different course that charted America's republicanism as a continuation of Renaissance thought through Machiavelli to Harrington on to revolutionary America (see *The Machiavellian Moment—Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republic Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975). Wood characterizes Pocock's influential views of American republicanism by saying that he “got carried away” (*Revolutionary Characters*, 98) Also see Gordon Wood's *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

monograph will posit that republican ideas were well known to the Ulster-Scots of Delaware, as they were put forth primarily through the Old Side Presbyterians. Thinkers like Algernon Sydney, John Trenchard, Thomas Gordon, and Joseph Addison were some of the classical republican voices put forward at New Castle County's Newark Academy, where the final Regimental Commander would be educated, and to which the first Commander subscribed.

The liberal tradition, as put forth by such historians as Carl Becker and Joyce Appleby, has at its roots the ideas attributed to John Locke: the equality of man, possessed of "natural rights," and motivated primarily by the pursuit of their passions and interests.⁹ This monograph argues that liberalism in Delaware was advanced through the popular New Side Presbyterians. Liberalisms' champions John Locke and Thomas Reid espoused individualist philosophies that complimented the New Side's dissenting view from the Presbyterian polity of the scriptural correctness of personal judgment and the perfectibility of Man. This school of thought was institutionalized at the College of New Jersey by its most recognized advocate, the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon. Known to the entire Delaware Regiment, Dr. Witherspoon preached a liberal tradition that would have been passed into the rapidly growing number of New Side congregations throughout the region.

In the case of the Delaware Patriots, this monograph will argue that no one particular school of thought predominated the ideological realm; in fact, Delaware experienced a blend of classical republicanism and liberalism (both enhanced by Scottish Enlightenment thinkers). By exploring key events in the shared histories of the Ulster-Scot and Scottish peoples who eventually found their homes in Delaware, along with the historical development of thought, it will be shown that without this aspect of Delaware culture, the full context of Revolutionary motivation cannot be understood.

⁹ Alan Gibson, *Interpeting the Founding*, 13. Carl Becker's *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (New York: Random House, 1964) explores Lockean ideas on the Founding. Joyce Appleby's work does not single out liberalism as exclusive, but as part of a broader tradition that included the persistence of republicanism. Her argument is that Lockean ideals of individual rights and industrialism were overlaid on preexisting market economies as justification over republican ideals. See *Capitalism and the New Social Order: the Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York University Press, 1984).

There is a rather limited selection of written histories of Delaware, but the preeminent historian of colonial Delaware is undoubtedly John Munroe. His writings are excellent, providing detailed and vivid accounts of early Delaware history. However, his writings tend to not explore the background of thought behind the Presbyterian rifts, and in so doing, leaves out some significant information essential to a more complete understanding of the context experienced in the actual lives of the Delaware Revolutionaries.¹⁰ The obvious expert on the subject of the Delaware Regiment is Christopher Ward, whose work *The Delaware Continentals 1776-1783* thoroughly explores the military engagements and force composition of the Regiment, but does not address the evolution of motivating philosophical factors that went into the creation of the Regiment (which were in development long before the time period defined in the title of the book).¹¹ There are also excellent histories of the Ulster-Scots, including Ian McBride's *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* and Patrick Griffin's *The People with No Name*, which shed a bright light on the schism controversies and the implications of Scottish nationalism in the colonies respectively.¹² Although excellent, these histories do not reach the level of detail necessary for inferences related to the unique Delawarean experience in the American Revolution.

In the end, the goal of this monograph is not as much about the social conditions of an American colony as it is an example of how the confluence of religion, politics, philosophical ideology, and cultural history can meet in such a way as to inspire armed rebellion. The challenges faced by the British in the American War of Independence are analogous to those faced by the American forces today in Iraq or Afghanistan in the sense that both Nations dealt with or are dealing with peoples whose religious views *are* their politics: peoples that can reach

¹⁰ John A. Munroe, *Colonial Delaware* (Wilmington, DE: Delaware Heritage Press, 2003). Also, Munroe's *The University of Delaware: A History* can be found published online at <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/>

¹¹ Christopher L. Ward, *The Delaware Continentals 1776-1783* (Wilmington, DE: The Historical Society of Delaware, 1941)

¹² Ian McBride, *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) and Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

back into their collective memories and draw historical lessons that, if understood, could indicate propensities that, if ignored, could result in disaster.

This monograph, as historical narrative, will focus on the details of ideological and institutional development that surrounded the Ulster-Scots in Delaware, and it will hopefully prove a useful contribution to that end. However, a lesson in the detail of this narrative can be found for modern military planners: that understanding the ideological overtones that effect specific regions of a conflict area can help to inform a strategy for victory. When developing strategies, planners must avoid the trap of seeing an enemy as a homogenous whole, as full understanding about the enemy (or allies) will be unachievable. Planners, with an eye on post-conflict governance, will have greater understanding of the situation if the enemy is viewed as a heterogeneous group with regional or local variations and nuances. In the case of Delaware's Ulster-Scots, knowledge of their political ideologies may have shaped how the problem was viewed from the perspective of the British, and changed the prosecution of the war itself.

The Delaware Continental Regiment: The Rise of the Ulster-Scots in New Castle County

As a Hessian officer who had seen service in Pennsylvania wrote home: "call this war, dearest friend, by whatsoever name you may, only call it not an American Rebellion, it is nothing more nor less than an Irish-Scotch Presbyterian Rebellion." ... (H)e added: "You know about the Huguenot wars in France. What they called 'religion', is here 'liberty', the same fanaticism, the same furious events."¹³

As compared to other colonies, Delaware's contribution to Washington's Continental Army was relatively small. Congress drafted requests of each colony to provide regimental-sized (the term "battalion" is used in this period interchangeably with "regiment") units that were reflective of the relative population of a colony: Massachusetts 15, Virginia 15, Pennsylvania 12, North Carolina 9, Maryland 8, Connecticut 8, South Carolina 6, New York 4, New Jersey 4, New Hampshire 3, Rhode Island 2, Georgia 1, and Delaware 1.¹⁴ At full authorized strength a Continental Regiment was supposed to have eight companies, each made up of eight squads containing ten privates each (80 per company).¹⁵ Delaware produced a total of five militia Regiments, but only one, the First New Castle County Battalion, permanently left Delaware to fight with the Continental Army.¹⁶ Renamed the First Delaware Continental Regiment, they served with distinction for the duration of the War. This section will discuss the events and

¹³ J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty 1660-1832* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 362.

¹⁴ Data taken from *The Journal and Order Book of Captain Robert Kirkwood* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1910), 105. Kirkwood meticulously copied important correspondence into his journal. This information was transcribed in a dispatch entitled "In Congress Sept. 16th, 1777". It is to be noted that this 88-battalion Army directed by Congress was mandated 5 days after the Battle of Brandywine, and almost two years after Delaware supplied its Continental Regiment to General Washington, originally requested in January 1776.

¹⁵ Michael Gallagher and Ralph Nelson. "The Real Story of the American Revolution: History of the (First) Delaware Regiment." <http://www.rsar.org/military/derghist.htm>, (accessed 5 November 2008) from information compiled by Ralph Nelson, Historian for the Delaware Society SAR (1997-2006) and Michael Gallagher, Historian for the Kirkwood Chapter DESSAR. Enlistments declined throughout the war, and Delaware's Regiment, like most others in the Army, never achieved full allocated strength. The muster rolls listed all but the commissioned officers, so a full strength regiment would have a muster roll of 690 privates, musicians, sergeants and corporals. Though close to that number in 1776, the battles of Long Island, Brandywine, and Camden significantly lowered the number of men in the Regiment.

¹⁶ The author of this monograph's focus is on the First New Castle County Battalion as the main unit from Delaware to leave the State to fight the English. However, other units also fought outside of Delaware on a temporary basis. The Second Delaware Regiment served for a period of five months in 1780 under Washington, but mainly because the First Delaware Regiment was unavailable due to movement at sea. See Gallagher and Nelson, "The Real Story of the American Revolution: History of the (First) Delaware Regiment." <http://www.rsar.org/military/derghist.htm>, accessed 5 November 2008.

conditions that led to the Regiment from New Castle County's selection for the Continental Army, and will introduce the question of why the unit designated as the primary unit to fight the English was comprised of so many Ulster-Scots. Though the formation of the Delaware Regiment was not official until 1776, the events that led to its creation began approximately two years earlier.

In many ways, 1774 was a year that saw the preeminence of New Castle County, Delaware's northernmost county, over its southern counties of Kent and Sussex. Although the capitol city of Dover was located in the central county of Kent, it was the more populous New Castle County that saw proactive measures taken that led the colony towards war preparations with Britain.¹⁷ In August of that year, a convention was held in the town of New Castle (located in New Castle County) to draft a formal list of grievances against British regulations against colonial manufacturing. The fact that this convention was held somewhere other than the capital of Dover alarmed politicians in Kent and Sussex Counties, fueling concerns that New Castle was achieving a position of prominence in Delaware politics.¹⁸ While flexing their political muscle caused Delaware Governor Caesar Rodney to mediate between the county political organizations, Kent and Sussex eventually sided with the results of the New Castle County convention.¹⁹ This would not be the last time that that the southern two counties would trail behind its northern neighbor as the evolution toward war progressed.

In the latter months of 1774, New Castle County led Delaware in responding to congressional dictates. In December, a meeting of county officials at the New Castle Court House resolved that Delaware should form militia units comprised of all male inhabitants between the ages of sixteen and fifty. Similar meetings in Kent County produced steps that fell short of calling for raising a militia force. Sussex County took no action at all.²⁰

¹⁷ Until 1776, when Delaware achieved the status of an independent colony, Delaware was often referred to as the "lower colonies" of Pennsylvania.

¹⁸ John Alfred Neuenschwander, "The Forgotten Section: The Middle Colonies and the American Revolution 1774-1776," (Master's Thesis, Case Western Reserve University 1971), 47.

¹⁹ Ibid. Caesar Rodney held the position of President of the colony, or in more common parlance, Governor.

²⁰ Neuenschwander, *The Forgotten Section*, 97.

The pattern of New Castle County acting as vanguard in the upcoming Revolution continued into 1775. News of the events of April in Lexington and Concord reached Delaware, and quickly produced a reaction in its northern county. Realizing the inevitability of armed conflict (or at least a willingness to participate, should hostilities escalate), New Castle County responded by levying a defense tax on its citizens, and was able to raise three well-armed regiments of militia by mid-summer.²¹ Three weeks after New Castle County began its organization of militia units, officers of those units went south to help Kent County organize its militia.²²

The New Castle County Battalion was an oddity among almost any other unit in the colonies in this respect: it had uniforms.²³ Colonel John Haslet, commanding officer of the battalion, wanted to ensure that the Delaware soldiers appeared to be anything but a rabble in arms: his personal specifications of blue coats with red lining, buckskin breeches, black gaiters, pewter buttons inscribed with the initials D.B.(for Delaware Battalion), topped off with hats that bore the inscription “Liberty and Independence. Delaware Regiment,” made Delaware’s contribution to the Continental Army the best uniformed and equipped in the army of 1776.²⁴ Haslet, an Irish-born man educated in Ireland for the Presbyterian ministry, began recruiting his battalion in January 1776.²⁵ One of the first men to be commissioned as an Officer in Haslet’s Regiment was a young farmer from White Clay Creek named Robert Kirkwood, Jr.

At the time of the outbreak of war, Kirkwood was undertaking studies at the Newark Academy, then under the leadership of the Reverend Alexander McDowell. Kirkwood was a second-generation American; his father had come from Scotland by way of Ulster (bringing his dead elder brother’s widow and children along with him). The elder Kirkwood married Sarah McDowell (apparently no relation to Reverend McDowell) and had nine children, all girls, except

²¹ Ibid., 166. As noted by Neuenschwander, a letter from Caesar Rodney to his brother, Thomas Rodney, dated May 8, 1775, described the atmosphere of New Castle County taxpayers upon the levying of the defense tax. He stated that the spirit was so high in the county that they “...pay it with more cheerfulness than they have been known to pay any tax heretofore...”.

²² Ibid.

²³ David Hackett Fisher, *Washington’s Crossing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2.

²⁴ Ward, *The Delaware Continentals*, 9.

²⁵ Ibid., 7.

for the youngest child, Robert, born in 1756. Growing up on a farm adjacent to the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church, just a few miles east of Newark, Robert Jr. showed an aptitude for academia that was recognized by his parents. When the time came for young Robert to get a higher education, Robert Sr., whose professional resume included both farmer and ruling Elder of the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church, enlisted the help of the Presbyterian Pastor of the same church, the Reverend Alexander McDowell—the very same McDowell whose professional resume included physician, court clerk, soldier, and then-serving “President of the College of Newark” (also known as Newark Academy).

With war imminent, Robert left his studies in Newark and sought to join the newly forming First New Castle County Battalion. It is highly likely that, given the close ties between religious polity and those in governmental political circles,²⁶ McDowell used his influence to secure for Robert an Officer’s commission in the Regiment, commanded by an Old Side Presbyterian associate named John Haslet.²⁷ Robert Kirkwood was commissioned on January 17, 1776, at the age of twenty.

Captain Kirkwood (the rank he would rise to during the Revolution) in many ways symbolizes the religious and philosophical ideologies experienced by the men of the Regiment. An educated Presbyterian who understood the politics within the church polity, Kirkwood would play a prominent role in the Regiment, proving ultimately to be the longest-serving officer in the Regiment, and finally acting as its Commanding Officer of the remainder of the Regiment at the

²⁶ Although there was no official religion in Delaware, the government distinctly favored Protestants. The state charter required that only Christians be elected to office, and the required oath denying papal authority effectively eliminated Roman Catholics from public office. See Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 161.

²⁷ McDowell was well-connected in the Presbyterian community, but also had an academic connection with prominent Delawareans. Thomas McKean, one of Delaware’s signers of the Declaration of Independence, was a graduate of the Newark Academy (as was fellow signer George Read), and the state’s President, John McKinley, was named to the board of directors for the school in April 1777 (along with Caesar Rodney and other prominent leaders). These gentlemen, along with their friend John Haslet, represented the growing political power of the Presbyterians in New Castle and Kent counties in the early 1770s, as Haslet, McKean, McKinley and others were found frequently voting together and in the minority. See Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 233, and Munroe, *History of the University of Delaware*. The descriptor of John Haslett’s Presbyterian affiliation as “Old Side”, as differentiated from “New Side”, is used here as an introduction to the term. It will be explained in detail in subsequent chapters.

battle of Cowpens.²⁸ After six years of service, Kirkwood’s meticulously-kept journal reveals clues that give insight into the main motivators for the Delaware Ulster-Scots: a shared history that predisposed them to dislike the English, and a religious/ideological confluence of thought that complimented and justified resistance.

When Kirkwood went into battle, the Scottish and Ulster-Scot community was a minority in the colony of Delaware—even a minority in New Castle County. Yet they made up a majority of the officer corps, taking with them beliefs toward war with England that were rooted in their common histories as a people, and taking with them the ideologies of their Presbyterian faith. This monograph will explore the concepts that were “in the air”; those ideas that passed through and around the Ulster-Scot community that the Continentals would have known—ideas that they would have been exposed to through friendly discussions in town, from a minister’s pulpit, or through formal education at a Presbyterian college. The ideas that were resident with the Ulster-Scot community would eventually take root in the founding documents of the United States, and formed the ideological foundations that the Nation celebrates to this day. In subsequent sections, this monograph will explore the ideas that were rooted in the Presbyterian Church of the Ulster-Scots and Scots of New Castle County: the ideas of Classical Republicanism and Classical Liberalism. When combined with their shared history, these ideologies helped to add context to the question: why did so many Ulster-Scots fight the British as part of the Delaware Continental Regiment? Using Captain Robert Kirkwood as representative of the Delaware Regiment members, subsequent sections will explore these questions.

²⁸ As a result of being at the forefront of the battle (and staying there until the end), the Delaware Regiment suffered heavy losses and was reduced in size to two companies after the battle of Camden on 16 August 1780. The Delaware Regiment was realigned as one of three companies under the command of Col. Daniel Morgan. Kirkwood commanded the second of these companies, comprised of the remainder of the Delaware Regiment and some men from Maryland. See *Journal of Robert Kirkwood*, 11, and Ward, *The Delaware Continentals*, 357. Ward claims Kirkwood’s command was the 3rd Company, but by Kirkwood’s own account, he commanded the 2nd Company. As commander of the remainder of the Delaware Regiment, Kirkwood’s only journal entry marking the battle of Cowpens, 17 January 1781, simply reads “Defeated Tarleton.” The next day, his unit began a six-day, 100 mile march.

The Shared History of Delaware's Scottish Presbyterians: Predisposed to fight the British

The Irish, who are incorporated into their forces, will through shame of their Country's Cause Deserted by them, Quickly leave the English, and Come over to us. The Scotch Remembering their former Liberty, and that it was the English who deprived them of it, will forsake their tyrants, and join the assertors of Freedom.

--From the journal and order book of Captain Robert Kirkwood²⁹

Delaware's Presbyterians came from different places, ultimately held varying views of their common religion, and worked in professions that ranged from minister to farmer to merchant. One common thread tied this diversity together: the men and women that supported the Revolutionary effort from the Scottish Presbyterian community all shared a common heritage. This shared history created both cohesion and division: it had a cohesive effect of producing a common hatred for the English, while divisive factions in church polity proved instrumental in pervading ideologies that defined government's relationship to the people. This section will explore the shared history of Delaware's Ulster-Scots and Scots as related to English tyranny and will also describe the origins of the Presbyterian schism that led to the pervasive ideas of republicanism and liberalism throughout the Delaware Presbyterian community.

There were two streams of Scots into the American colonies: one stream from Ulster in northern Ireland, and the other directly from the motherland.³⁰ Their experiences, given probable family connections across the narrow sea that separated Ireland and Scotland, were known to one another; each group's experience reinforcing the eventual need to seek a life away from English rule. Many of the people in these two streams of immigration established a life in northern Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and would later be vital in the rebellion in the American colonies against their oppressors in England.

The journey of mass population of Scots to Ulster began around 1607, when, after defeating the Irish rebellion, King James I offered some 500,000 acres of forfeit land to

²⁹ Robert Kirkwood, *The Journal and Order Book of Captain Robert Kirkwood* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1970), 112. See footnote on page 23 of this monograph for more information on this quote.

³⁰ George Fraser Black, *Scotland's Mark on America* (New York: Bibliobazaar, 2006), 17.

colonists.³¹ Although there is evidence to indicate that the intent of this offering was for English settlers, King James I, then-king of a united England and Scotland, permitted the mass settlement of Scots to Ulster. By 1612, an estimated 10,000 Scots had sought a new life in Ulster, and population growth of Scots in Ulster continued into the eighteenth century. Archbishop Synge, in 1715, estimated that not less than 50,000 families had immigrated to Ulster since the end of the Revolution in 1688.³² Despite what appeared to be the promise of a new life with new land, troubles followed not long after establishing themselves in Ulster. The Irish, having been displaced from their lands by James I, rebelled against the Scottish and English settlers, which started an exodus to the American colonies on the order of 12,000 per year.³³ Following the Revolution of 1688, the English government began levying restrictions on the industry and commerce of the Ulster-Scots; these burdens, along with multiple other financial impositions, including tithing churches to which the Presbyterians had no affiliation, impelled emigration to the American colonies from 1718 on.³⁴

Conditions in the motherland of Scotland, concurrent with those in Ulster, spurred high degrees of resentment of English governance. Scottish settlers in North America in the 1760s would have recognized the similarities between occurrences on that continent and events that transpired in seventeenth century Scotland. Just as the French and Indian War in North America put significant financial strains on England's purse, so too had earlier wars effected the very people whose progeny would populate the Middle Colonies.

In the late sixteenth century, the English crown routinely borrowed money to finance affairs of the State, mainly through loans and land taxes.³⁵ But as time went on, these streams of income began to fall short of requirements, resulting in peacetime deficits.³⁶ The Crown deemed it necessary to, among other measures, levy forced loans upon its subjects. These measures were

³¹ Black, *Scotland's Mark on America*, 19.

³² *Ibid.*, 20.

³³ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 92.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 94.

not taken lightly; in fact, tax evasion and resistance by the landed masses severely impacted the Crown's ability to wage the wars during the sixteenth and through the seventeenth centuries, including wars with Spain, the subjugation of Ireland, and war with France.³⁷ In the end, it was not war with foreign nations that led to the financial collapse of the Crown, but Charles I's prosecution of a war on Scotland that saw the peacetime deficit issue result in military and economic failure.³⁸

England's financial woes were not simply limited to England; Ireland and Scotland suffered as well.³⁹ As fears of the financial situation developed, and amid concerns over political freedoms, another concern came to light: concerns that the wrath of the Anglican-backed monarchy would impose religious tyranny on the Presbyterians of Scotland.⁴⁰ These fears came to pass. Charles, desperate for funds and in an attempt to finally subjugate Scotland, abolished Edinburgh town council, sought to impose an English prayer book on the Scottish clergy, and, perhaps most offensive, revoked the symbol of power in Scotland: the nobilities' land and titles.⁴¹ These policies proved fatal to the reign of Charles I. From the financial crisis that resulted in the Crown's inability to finance troops willing to fight was born the ill-fated policy choices that sought to increase royal coffers at the expense of Scotland's purse and pride. The ensuing Scottish rebellion removed Charles I from power.⁴²

These memories of English tyranny were not forgotten by Delaware's Ulster- Scots. At the conclusion of the French and Indian War, they witnessed the imposition of the first tax levied on the colonies designed to defray war costs incurred by England. When the Stamp Act Congress (attended by Delawareans Caesar Rodney and Thomas McKean) achieved political success in its revocation, to most Delawareans of Scottish descent, this appeared to be a precursor to more

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 100.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 101.

⁴² Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 102.

severe tyrannical taxation efforts to come, just as tax evasion in sixteenth-century Scotland had led to the revocation of land property.⁴³

Those Ulster-Scots that immigrated to Delaware and later took up arms against the British government were not new at that game. The spirit of volunteerism was rampant in Ulster amongst the Protestants, as such activity propelled common men into public service and public life.⁴⁴ This volunteerism was inspired by the Presbyterian Church, which was at once religious and political.⁴⁵ In upheavals in Ireland in the seventeenth- and eighteenth centuries, it was not

⁴³ This history of English oppression of the Scots in Scotland and Ulster continued on into the members of the Delaware Regiment. An example of the rebellious nature and of the Scots, and their intense dislike of the English, found its way into Captain Robert Kirkwood's journal. In it, on page 108, Kirkwood transcribes a modification of the Speech of Galgachus given to the Caledonian Army—a speech given to the Scots as they prepared to revolt against the Romans. The original classic speech begins as follows:

Countrymen and Fellow Soldiers.

When I consider the cause, for which we have drawn our swords, and the necessity of striking an effectual blow, before we sheathe them again, I feel joyful hopes arising in my mind, that in one day an opening shall be made for the restoration of British Liberty, and for the shaking off the Infamous Yoke of Roman slavery. Caledonia is yet free, the all grasping power of Rome has not yet been able to seize our Liberty, but it is to be preserved only by valor. (Script continues, extolling the virtuous Caledonians and demonizing the evil Roman invaders. This speech was supposedly delivered to the Caledonians, or early Scots, at the battle of Mons in A.D. 83 or 84.)

Robert Kirkwood's journal entry (undated, but presumably written July 12, 1777—two months before the Battle of Brandywine Creek):

Countrey Men, and fellow Soldiers.

When I Consider the Cause, for which we have Drawn our Swords, and the Necessaty of Striking an effectual Blow, before we Sheath them again, I feel Joifull hopes arising In my mind, that in one day an opening Shall be made for the Restoration of American Liberty, and for shaking off the Infamous Yoke of British Slavery. America is yet free, the all grasping power of Briton has not yet been Able to seize our Liberty, but it is only by Valor. (reproduced with actual misspellings from original journal entry). Kirkwood does include what appears to be an interesting addition:

The Irish, who are incorporated into their forces, will through shame of their Country's Cause Deserted by them, Quickly leave the English, and Come over to us. The Scotch Remembering their former Liberty, and that it was the English who deprived them of it, will forsake their tyrants, and join the assertors of Freedom.

It is not unusual for Robert Kirkwood to have known of the Galgachus speech. It is a famous piece in the annals of republican thought: the original quote above was taken from a book by Caleb Bingham titled *The Columbian Orator* (Lincoln and Gleason, 1807), a compilation of classic republican tracts. (As an interesting note concerning *The Columbian Orator*, its title page notes that it was “Published According to Act of Congress.” This idea that the Government should promote concepts of republican virtue was a main topic of contention between Old and New Side factions, a concept explored in the next chapter.) The original speech was written by Publius Cornelius Tacitus in 120 A.D., and would have been read by Kirkwood as translated by Thomas Gordon (*The Works of Tacitus*, 1737). Gordon is most famous for his collaboration with John Trenchard, a partnership that produced *Cato's Letters*.

⁴⁴ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, 9. McBride offers a detailed analysis of the spirit of volunteerism in the Ulster Protestant church.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4. McBride posits that church and state separation concepts familiar to Americans today were not a part of the eighteenth century American context: religion and politics were not separate and discrete categories of thought and activity. This concept is contained in countless volumes; since the Church of England was closely associated with English political authority, it only stands to reason that dissenting forms of Protestantism would also equate church polity with civil politics as well.

uncommon for a vast percentage of volunteers for service to come from the Presbyterian Scottish community.⁴⁶ As described in a letter to Edmund Burke, the same group of Ulster Scots from which the Delaware population originated saw a great civic opportunity in volunteering for military service: it was a great leveler, and helped to give the lower ranks of the community an independent and republican spirit.⁴⁷ The concept of “independence” amongst the Ulster Scots was a political one. The concept was based on the view that politics was a contest ranging from local level up to Parliamentary level; a contest that pitted aristocratic influence against the independent (or popular) interest.⁴⁸ This concept of fighting for independence was the continuation of a long tradition of hostility toward the political dominance of the landed elite.⁴⁹ This enmity not only had political roots, but religious as well.

The area in Ulster, as typified by the demographics of city and country dwellers, brought the political disputes into religious terms. Religion and politics during eighteenth-century Ireland were not separate and discrete categories of thought, as those conceptions might constitute in the minds of people today.⁵⁰ With the Presbyterians occupying the city and northern plantations, the thinly spread Anglicans helped to complete the picture of religious and political melding. In a scenario that will be repeated in their collective minds once established in the northern county of Delaware, the Anglicans, primarily occupying the southern counties, enjoyed a majority of overall land, social prestige, and political power. The one factor that Delaware’s Ulster-Scots may have found at odds from their experience in Ireland is that the Anglican “landed wealth” in Delaware did not necessarily translate into real wealth: census data of the time reveals relatively low incomes, and many Kent and Sussex farmers were only of a subsistence level.⁵¹ Seen by most

⁴⁶ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, 9.

⁴⁷ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, 10. This is taken from a letter written in 1780 from William Drennan, Irish pamphleteer, to Edmund Burke (1729-1797). Burke, a republican thinker of his time and member of the House of Commons, was a prominent debater, author and speaker.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, 4.

⁵¹ Jackson Turner Main, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965). This is discussed in Main’s Chapter 1, entitled “Economic Class Structure of the North”, where he examines tax records of landowners from all three Delaware counties. Most of the large landowners were in New Castle County, as well as most of the commercial farming. Kent and Sussex counties, by contrast, were mostly small farms; very few men of wealth lived in the southern counties. One

Presbyterians as an agent of the oppressive British government, Anglicans were viewed with great distrust amongst the naturally rebellious Ulster Scots—another attitude that would survive transplantation in America.

Ulster-Scots shared a common loathing of English rule based on patterns of oppressive taxation, land revocation, and attacks on religious fronts. But the Ulster-Scots, though united in their distrust of England, were not without their own significant internal conflicts. Within the ranks of the Ulster Presbyterians, there came a schism that would have direct implications for the ideological rift that occurred later in Delaware. Among the various Protestant denominations of the time, questions of ecclesiastical polity, fading in eighteenth century England, remained vivid in Scotland and Ireland, intensified in the American colonies, and engaged with newly-developing controversy on key points of theology.⁵² Within the Presbyterian ranks, two opposing factions began to form: the “Old Light” and the “New Light.”

In general, the Old Light faction represented the older, traditional, conservative members of the Presbyterian Church, while the New Light faction were seen as evangelical, liberal, and were generally representative of the younger generation of Protestants. The New Light movement emerged to challenge the Calvinistic Old Light principles, the most pointed of which was a disagreement concerning the Church practice of confession. While one party implored all to declare their assent to the classic formula of British Calvinist theology to check heresy and buoy the dissenting church in a confessional state, another denounced the measure as an infringement of individual rights.⁵³ The evolution of thought demonstrated by the New Side faction seems a reasonable extension of two intellectual principles of the Reformation embraced by Calvin: the rightful duty of free inquiry and the priesthood of all believers.⁵⁴

reason for this could be their proximity to markets: the main markets for goods would have been the port towns of New Castle and Philadelphia—more than a 90 mile one way trip for a farmer in southern Sussex County.

⁵² Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, 30.

⁵³ Griffin, *The People With No Name*, 39.

⁵⁴ G.P. Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 8. Gooch asserts that these two Reformation principles of Calvin’s made the leap from the theological to the political: Free inquiry (the ability to read and understand the Bible oneself, without the need for a “qualified” interpreter) led straight from theological to political criticism; and the

While these principles were generally accepted by Calvinist Protestant sects, the New Light subscribers discriminated on fine points of sacred interpretation, such as the perfectibility of Man and the concept that religious truths cannot be furthered through compulsion, but by persuasion and argument.⁵⁵ As such, New Light Presbyterians were adept in the art of argument, honed in the debates that were conducted with the vanguard of the rank-and-file traditionalists of the Old Light persuasion. With the Synod⁵⁶ on the side of the Old Light Presbyterians, and a lack of institutional foundations that supported New Light development, New Light arguments in favor of individual rights failed to make significant inroads with traditionalists. These failures to convince the intractable Old Side adherents occurred despite their superior oratory skill honed within the crucible of internal debate. These points of argument were characterized as calm and rational on the part of the New Light debaters.⁵⁷ As these points of contention revived themselves in the New World, the debating tactics used to persuade Presbyterians to this new way of thinking would take on a decidedly emotional flavor, having much more success in achieving political strength within the Presbyterian polity.

After decades of living in Ulster, the Scots experienced the intimidation of the English Government through the Anglican Church, and witnessed English tyranny in the form of land revocation and taxation. Those who immigrated to the American middle colonies had already witnessed a pattern of English oppression. When the Stamp Act was introduced, the Delaware Ulster Scots felt that this was only the beginning of greater impositions of the English upon their lives. Having fled that twice now, from Scotland to Ulster, then on to America, the Ulster Scots were not about to let that happen again. But fear of British tyranny is not the only thing that followed them to America. The rifts in the Presbyterian Church between the New Light and Old Light factions would survive transplantation, and would eventually help foster ideologies into the

theory of universal priesthood indicated the general direction of the investigation. The first led to liberty; the second to equality.

⁵⁵ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, 7.

⁵⁶ The Synod is the governing body in the Presbyterian Church. There are many Synods, each one overseeing many presbyteries in a geographical area. The Ulster Synod and the Philadelphia Synod had similar views on the Old Side/New Side debate, and became the focal point of the internal political debate concerning Church doctrine.

⁵⁷ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, 8.

minds of America's Presbyterians that would not only help give philosophical justification for rebellion against England, but would also become central in the debates concerning the formation of a new American government.

Old Side Republicans VS. New Side Liberals

*In the thirteenth century the key words would no doubt be God, sin, grace, salvation, heaven and the like; in the nineteenth century, matter, fact, matter-of-fact, evolution, progress; in the twentieth century, relativity, process, adjustment, function, complex. In the eighteenth century the words without which no enlightened person could reach a restful conclusion were nature, natural law, first cause, reason, sentiment, humanity, perfectibility [...].*⁵⁸

The Ulster-Scots and Scots that settled in New Castle County in the eighteenth century unwittingly reaped the intellectual benefits of the Presbyterian schism, as they were exposed to the great concepts that informed the founding of our nation in a unique way. This section will explain the divisions of the Presbyterian Church in the Delaware/Pennsylvania/New Jersey area and show how this division led to the development of educational institutions that stressed concepts to both students and congregations with distinct ideological perspectives.

Though veiled loosely in the trappings of religion, the Ulster-Scots and Scots tended to use their church polity disagreements to advance the ideas of great thinkers in order to validate claims to liberty and justification for rebellion. Because the battleground for these ideas was the individual Presbyterian Churches in the area (often hosting preachers from both sides of the issue speaking at the same churches), the residents of New Castle County would have been well aware of the aspects of the Old Side/New Side argument. As ministers preached politics from the pulpit as a matter of practice, the Ulster-Scot community was able to synthesize political views that backed each side of the debate on the role of government and its relation to individuals, with the Old Side views supported by the classical republican perspective, and the New Side advocating more classical liberal ideas.⁵⁹ This is an account of the development of thought between the Old Side republicans and the New Side liberals that became part of what Thomas Jefferson called the

⁵⁸ Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 47.

⁵⁹ McBride notes that in Ulster, it was not surprising to find that politicians, landlords, and magistrates frequently pinpointed the Presbyterian pulpit as the driving force behind popular disaffection, with Presbyterian ministers leading reform movements with ideological direction. Ministers intertwined political demands with ecclesiastical and theological principles, using the sermon as a vehicle for political argument. *Scripture Politics*, 11.

“harmonizing sentiments of the day” – the kind of sentiments that permeated conversation and inspired Delaware’s Ulster-Scots.⁶⁰

The Philadelphia Synod, the main Presbyterian Church governance organization that oversaw presbyteries in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, had a decidedly Old Light leaning through the first half of the eighteenth century. When the immigration to the New World happened, tensions began to rise again between the Old and New Lights, with the Philadelphia Synod as a main battleground. The outcome of the disagreement would result in a fundamental reversal of influence from Old to New in the Presbyterian Church in America.

Though not representative of official Philadelphia Synod policies, the beliefs of the New Light groups from Ulster began to grow in popularity between 1726 and 1741. Refashioned as the “New Side” group, their version of Presbyterian worship was not well received by the more traditional Old Side practitioners. The main argument between the New and Old Side factions came down to three main differences: the New Side believed in worship services that stressed emotionalism and enthusiasm; they also held that conversion to salvation was a personal one, stressing the individual’s role in receiving grace; and those who had received individual grace stood in a position to judge those who had not experienced personal conversion.⁶¹ In essence, to New Siders, Man was “perfectible,” and thus could strive for salvation through individual works. This emphasis on individualism was fundamentally in opposition to the Calvinistic, Old Side belief in Man’s imperfectability and depravity.⁶² The Old Side faction was appalled by these

⁶⁰ Thomas Jefferson to Richard Henry Lee, May 8, 1825. Paul Leicester Ford, Editor, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1892-99) XVI, 118. Quoted in Joseph J. Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 64.

⁶¹ Rev. Richard Webster, *History of the Presbyterian Church in America, From its Origin Until the Year 1760* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson: 1857), 164.

⁶² According to J.C.D. Clark, eighteenth-century Protestantism (including Presbyterianism) shared three overriding concepts: the depravity of man, the sovereignty of God, and the necessity of worshipping God and ordering the church strictly in accordance with Biblical prescriptions (*The Language of Liberty*, 29-30). Also, Calvinist doctrine (which was the basis for Protestant beliefs) stated that Man was clearly imperfectable, as forgiveness and peace came from God alone, and cannot be earned by anything Man could do for himself. According to Calvin himself, “Even saints cannot perform one work which, if judged on its merits, is not deserving of condemnation”. See Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, *History of Political Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987). 320. From the perspective of the Old Side adherents, who clung to these Protestant and Calvinistic precepts, the New Side ideas of stressing “individual salvation” and “individual works” seemed a negation of all religious truth. This emphasis on the power of the individual became a natural stepping stone to liberal philosophical thought while the Old

convictions, and there developed a serious and unfriendly rift. The rift was exacerbated by lack of political redress. Though the New Side was growing wildly in popularity among the churchgoers, the Synod was filled predominantly with Old Side ministers and elders. This growing tension was bound to lead to greater separation of the factions, as the Presbyterian population of New Castle County continued to rise, and the New Side popularity rose with it.

The Presbyterian Church in New Castle County was growing at a rate that far outstripped any other Christian denomination, but still fell victim to one of the limiting factors of all colonial churches: a shortage of ministers.⁶³ As a result, traveling ministers often came to speak to local congregations. It appears that selection of who would be allowed to speak to congregations was partially influenced by the speaker's ability to inspire the emotionalism associated with New Side worship styles. In the fall of 1739, White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church minister Charles Tennant (whose father, William Tennant, had started the Log College in Bucks County as a school for the training of New Side ministers) invited a traveling preacher to speak there, Reverend George Whitefield, drawing crowds reported to be up to ten thousand.⁶⁴ The same Reverend preached at congregations throughout New Castle County as he toured the country, and was met with great enthusiasm, demonstrating a growing willingness of New Castle County Presbyterians to accept emotional and enthusiastic church services that supported New Side

Side idea of subverting one's fallable self to the good of the Church fell closely in line with republican philosophy.

⁶³ See Harold B. Hancock, *Liberty and Independence: The Delaware State During the American Revolution* (Wilmington, DE: Delaware American Revolutionary Bicentennial Commission, 1976, 27.) Hancock annotates the number of churches in the colony on the eve of the Revolution as follows: 29 Presbyterian (17 in New Castle County), 12 Anglican, 12 Quaker, 1 Lutheran, and 1 Baptist. Using writings from Thomas McKean, Hancock points out that, though less numerous, more people probably affiliated with the Anglican church—especially in Kent and Sussex Counties. These Anglicans most likely did not regularly attend church services, however, due to the fact that, despite having 12 churches, there were only 5 Anglican ministers in the colony. McKean also observed that the Presbyterians were the strongest denomination in New Castle County.

⁶⁴ Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 164. This is likely an exaggeration, as there were scarcely ten thousand people in all of New Castle County at the time. Reverend Whitefield preached from Lewis, Delaware, in Sussex County, through New Castle County, and was widely reported to be a preacher of great enthusiasm. Nondenominational in his message, his enthusiasm was not well received by Anglican congregations in the southern county, but was widely accepted and welcomed in New Castle County's Presbyterian churches. See Munroe, 163.

methods and beliefs.⁶⁵ That year, 1739, marked the beginning of the formal division between the Old Side and New Side factions when William Tennant renounced the authority of the Philadelphia Presbytery. Frustrated by his inability to make inroads with the Old Side-heavy Synod elders, Tennant made claim in a letter to the Synod that, “If we were the majority, it would be binding on you to obey the rules, but seeing you sightless and Christless ones are in the majority, the rules are null, and, like yourselves, fit only to be despised”.⁶⁶ Addressing specific protests to the New Side ideology, a letter was presented to the Synod that identified such blasphemies as:

...preaching and maintaining that all true converts are as certain of this gracious state as a person can be of what he knows by his outward senses; and are able to give a narrative of the time and manner of their conversion, or else they conclude then to be in a natural, or graceless state, and that a gracious person can judge of another’s gracious state otherwise than by profession and life.⁶⁷

This accusation that Old Siders were trapped in a graceless state and were susceptible to judgement by “true converts” due to the fact that they did not subscribe to the idea of “individual salvation” outraged the Old Side ministers.

When Francis Alison (co-signator of the above letter critical of the New Side ideologies) suggested the creation of a new school in New London, Pennsylvania (approximately three miles from the Delaware border near Newark), William Tennant took this as an affront to his Log College, and defiantly began creating ministers from his new school, located in New Jersey, without permission of the Synod. In 1741, the Synod, shocked at the New Side ideas of exalting enthusiasm above reason and theological knowledge, expelled William Tennant and the enthusiasts. Thus began the schism of the Old Side versus the New Side Presbyterians, which lasted until 1758. This schism had a major influence in New Castle County. Other areas, such as Philadelphia and New Jersey, had clear delineations of preference towards Old or New Side

⁶⁵ Ibid. Preaching beliefs that supported a New Side perspective had its consequences. Charles Tennant was later called to answer for defending some of Whitefield’s assertions. Such was the antagonism between the Old and New Side preachers and the Synod leadership. See Webster, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 152.

⁶⁶ Webster, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 164.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 170. Among the many ministers that signed this letter was Francis Alison, who would continue to play a vital role in the ideological battles in the schism. His activity and advocacy will prove to be key to promoting Old Side ideas through education.

worship. New Castle County, however, was infused with a strong mix of both. Congregations often worshipped at the same meetinghouses, at different times and on different days, severed from each other “as if by oceans.”⁶⁸ Ironically, after the union (referring to the union of Old and New Side factions that ended the schism), New Castle Presbytery was a model of unification. Other Presbyteries saw great political infighting as to the balance in numbers of Old and New Side ministers, but New Castle County’s Presbytery embraced ministers and congregations in both camps, and ill feelings were almost nonexistent after the joining of the Old and New Siders.⁶⁹ Although the Presbyterian schism was long resolved (at least formally) at the onset of the Revolution, the institutions that were established as a result of it became champions of two of the primary philosophical influences of the day: republicanism and liberalism.

During the schism, the argument of how to educate new Presbyterians was a new front in the war within the Synod. William Tennant’s expulsion from the Synod accompanied a realization amongst both the New and Old Side ministers and elders: throughout the years of the schism, senior members in the Synod began to die off, shifting the balance of power within the Synod to a demographic that was becoming more and more sympathetic to New Side thinking. Old age was not the only thing threatening the balance of power within the ranks of the Presbyterian elite. The supply of legitimate “combatants” in this ideological and philosophical battle was shrinking, and, as each side saw it, more ministers had to be produced to carry the mantle of Presbyterianism.

The rapid expansion of Presbyterian churches required that ministers be produced to service the communities, but production of Presbyterian ministers was not a fast process, as the synod required that all Presbyterian ministers be educated.⁷⁰ Since educated clergy was a requirement, educational institutions were established with the goal of both educating clergy and communities. However, within the context of Old Side/New Side rifts, what this education should

⁶⁸ Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 203.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 274.

⁷⁰ Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 164. Though the Presbyterians had a mandate for education, what they did not require was Episcopal ordination, as did the Anglicans. Therefore, though the education process en route to clergy status took time, one contributing factor to the more rapid growth of Presbyterian clergy was the lack of requirement to return to England for ordination, as was required of the Anglicans.

consist of was a matter of debate. Colleges began to align along this schism, with agendas for producing graduate clergy who would represent their views of Presbyterianism. One of the most prominent of the Old Side colleges was the New London Academy, later to become the Newark Academy, established by Francis Alison in 1743.⁷¹

Francis Alison was an Ulster-Scot who had been educated in Edinburgh, Scotland.⁷² He was recognized as a leading scholar of classics; particularly Greek.⁷³ With a defined intent on making the New London/Newark Academy bulwarks against any New Side resurgence, Alison set about creating a curriculum that supported a traditional education. For Alison, that equated to a focus on classical republican ideals.

The curriculum at Alison's School focused broadly on languages (most likely Latin and Greek, possibly Hebrew), philosophy and divinity.⁷⁴ The school was also open to all. Advertisements boasted cheap tuition (board was partially provided by Alison himself: many students lived with him in his house) with an aim that "farmers can educate their children so as to fit them for almost any station in life..."⁷⁵ In the promotion of the republican ideals of "virtue," Alison's school enticements for prospective students (taught only by Professors who were hired as men of "decent Deportment and approved Virtue, as well as accurate Learning") appealed to those seeking classical educations for their children in the town of Newark; a town that "affords no public Amusement, nor any remarkable Instances of Profligacy or Vice."⁷⁶ While there, students could study from some of the available books, including selections from thirty-five titles in forty-five volumes, including Francis Bacon, Descartes, Grotius, Marcus Aurelius, and

⁷¹ The Newark Academy is the school that would later become the University of Delaware, the defining institution of the city of Newark, Delaware.

⁷² Munroe, *History of the University of Delaware*. <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/chapter1.html>. It should be noted that Munroe also points out that Alison's academic achievements include not only a Doctor of Divinity from the University of Glasgow, awarded in 1756, but also honorary master's degrees from Yale and Princeton. This might indicate that, despite ideological rifts between Old- and New Side educational systems, civility and cooperation were commonplace.

⁷³ Munroe, *History of the University of Delaware*. <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/chapter1.html>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Munroe, *History of the University of Delaware*. <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/chapter1.html>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Locke.⁷⁷ These were not the only republican-based tomes for the education of Old Side advocates, however. Alison also had his students translate into Latin excerpts from *The Spectator* and *The Guardian* essays of Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, representing a very republican idealism to those students.⁷⁸ During the formation of his school, Alison began a correspondence with an associate from his alma mater at the University of Glasgow, Frances Hutcheson. Hutcheson's book *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) proved popular in both Europe and America,⁷⁹ and his book *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy*

⁷⁷ Ibid. In the annals of republican thought, each of these authors contributes to the entirety of the belief. Some concepts from these authors have significant overlap with the classical Liberal tradition—most notably John Locke. Of Locke's works, the most famous text claimed by Classical Liberalists as a foundational document is *Second Treatise of Government*, first published in 1690. Evidence suggests, however, that this particular work was not widely read throughout the colonies, as it was not until 1773 that it was reprinted in Boston. It would seem likely that Alison's library would have been limited to Locke's earlier popular works, such as the highly influential *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* from 1690, a foundational piece for empiricist philosophy. See Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, 26.

⁷⁸ Addison's work was not limited to *The Spectator*. The year 1713 saw the first performance of the exceptionally popular play *Cato*, which one of the finest examples of republican political thought of the period. One of its greatest admirers was General George Washington, who famously had it enacted for him and his troops during the winter of 1778 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, as a morale builder. According to Captain Kirkwood's journal, the Delaware Regiment was not present for this performance of *Cato*, as they took up winter quarters in Wilmington, Delaware, during the winter of 1777-1778. (Kirkwood, 277). Due to Kirkwood's education at the Newark Academy, it is highly likely that *Cato* was as well known to him as it would have been to the soldiers who attended the Valley Forge performance.

Addison's *Cato* displays republicanism in its very subject matter: Cato, the main character, is defending the existence of the Roman Senate and republican form of government from the tyranny of Caesar. The play, though a tragedy which sees the eventual failure and suicide of its main character, greatly inspired American audiences through its portrayal of the supremacy of virtue in a citizenry. Forrest McDonald, in his foreword to *Cato*, encapsulates the essence of the conflict between Republican and Liberal thought:

*Both classical and modern theorists of republics held that their actuating principle was public virtue—virtue in the sense of selfless, full-time, manly devotion to the public weal. Many Americans had been governed by such public spiritedness during the war and made great sacrifices for the cause of independence, but in normal times people were too individualistic...Americans believed in original sin, which in eighteenth-century terms meant that they believed men were driven by their "passions"—drives for self gratification—and that the "ruling" passions of most public men were ambition and avarice... (Joseph Addison. *Cato: a Tragedy and other Essays*, Indianapolis, Indiana: The Liberty Fund, 2004. ix)*

Many famous American political quotations of the era had their origins in this play: Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death", Nathan Hale's "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" and many passages found in letters by George Washington and others were quoted or paraphrased from Addison. (ibid., viii)

In a related side note, as Addison's fame as a political essayist rose, so did his standing in the Whig Party. One of his political appointments was Commissioner of Appeals, a position recently vacated by none other than John Locke. (ibid., xii)

⁷⁹ Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman*, 180. Hutcheson presents an interesting example of the fine distinctions between republican and liberal political thought: he held liberal ideas of natural rights, but falls short of ascribing primacy of the individual in relation to the public whole. This focus on the public whole over the individual is one of the main distinguishers between the two schools of

(1747) became the basis for Alison's curriculum.⁸⁰ Similar to other republican thinkers of his time, Hutcheson advocated the concept that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of general happiness—a strong advocacy of the whole of society over the primacy of the individual.⁸¹ Perhaps one of the most threatening concepts put forth by Hutcheson as perceived by New Side Liberals was the assertion that since religious factional fighting may subvert the good of the whole of society, that “some power of censorship might be conceded” to the state, implying that the teaching of “virtue” should not be handled by religion, but by the State.⁸² Additionally offensive to the individualism-minded New Siders was the Machiavellian precept accepted by republican thinkers that “faction,” whether religions or otherwise, was to be highly discouraged, as a precaution against corruption.⁸³ In the view of the New Siders, a lack of “faction” meant tyranny by the majority, which was seen as a direct threat to the concept of the primacy of the individual—but more pressingly, could represent the elimination of such “factions” as the New Side movement itself.⁸⁴

thought; the other being the rightful role of the relationship between government, individuals, and “virtue”. Interestingly, Hutcheson was considered a part of the “liberal” crowd from the University of Glasgow, as distinguished from various categories of “whigs”.

⁸⁰ University of Pennsylvania Archives, “Penn in the 18th Century: Francis Alison.” http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1700s/alison_fra.html (accessed 11 January 2009). In this article, it states that evidence suggests that Alison Evidence was educated in a clandestine Presbyterian academy, perhaps that of Frances Hutcheson in Dublin.

⁸¹ Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman*. 190.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 188-189. The position argued is that of Hutcheson, but the author of this monograph has made the individual assessment of the New Side Liberal's sense of the implied danger in this concept: Many of Rev. John Witherspoon's sermons and lectures detract from Hutcheson's positions. It is posited that the New Side Liberals would have seen this concept as a perpetuation of the Old/New Side schism, fearing that the Old Side faction would seek to suppress the New Side sentiments in a new American government. Many of the Founders were of a decidedly Republican persuasion, not the least of all was General Washington.

⁸³ Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding*, 25.

⁸⁴ This assertion is based on the implications found both in Madison's writings in Federalist #10 and Dr. Witherspoon's sermon of September 7, 1758. Madison, a student of Dr. Witherspoon, writes in general about the hazards of a lack of faction in a republic. Madison argues that a greater variety of faction will act as a hedge against a tyranny of majority—among many of his examples is that of a religious sect which “may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the Confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it must secure the national councils against any danger from that source.” See *The Federalist Papers* (Sweetwater Press, 2006), 81. Decades earlier, at the height of the Presbyterian schism, Witherspoon offers a sermon titled *The Charge of Sedition and Faction against Good Men, Especially Faithful Ministers, Conferred and Accounted For*, wherein he equates “faction” with “sedition”, in the context that the New Side group is being accused of such things by the Old Siders. Witherspoon uses numerous biblical and historical examples whereby small religious factions that dissented from the conventional view were persecuted into nonexistence. It is this fear that his New Siders would be regarded as a seditious faction, a fear reinforced by the conditions of the schism, that likely inspired Witherspoon's

For more than a decade, Alison educated the youth of the middle colonies—not just in republican ideals, but in general subjects as well as Old Side ideology as a part of an overall broad-spectrum curriculum. There is little doubt that Alison’s personal correspondence with Francis Hutcheson places him decidedly in the “republican” camp. This political emphasis did not change when the Academy changed hands. In 1752, in the midst of the schism, Alison accepted a position as the rector at the College of Philadelphia, led by the Anglican minister Reverend William Smith.⁸⁵ His replacement at the Academy of Newark was his staunch Old Side ally, the Reverend Alexander McDowell, who changed very little about the way students were taught at the school.⁸⁶

The Newark Academy proved very successful. During their academic careers prior to the start of the Revolution, Alison and McDowell produced an impressive group of graduates that proved to be influential in the formative events of the Nation. These students included Thomas McKean, George Read, and Captain Robert Kirkwood.⁸⁷

Notwithstanding the influential graduates of their institution, the efforts of Alison and McDowell to shore up the ranks of Old Side-minded ministers fell short. After the schism ended in 1758, the emotive evangelists of the New Side far outnumbered the republican, conservative Old Siders. The end of the schism did not stop the Old Side education process; however, the republican Old Siders were tenacious in maintaining their own academy for minister production, in case the old battle once again erupted.⁸⁸

While the Old Side faction was creating a new generation of ministers educated with republican ideas in Alison and McDowell’s school in Newark, the New Side faction realized the

teachings to Madison. See Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, *The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon, Vol 2*. (Philadelphia, PA: William W. Woodward, 1802), 415.

⁸⁵ It is speculated that Alison may have accepted this position in order to keep in check any Anglican influence in the region. See Munroe, *History of the University of Delaware*. . <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/chapter1.html>. Accessed. 9 January 2009.

⁸⁶ Munroe, *History of the University of Delaware*. After the Newark Academy changed hands from Alison to McDowell, it was described as "nearly the same" under McDowell as under Alison, according to Matthew Wilson, a student under Alison who was appointed by the synod to share teaching duties with McDowell in 1754. <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/chapter1.html>. Accessed 8 Jan 09.

⁸⁷ McKean and Read were signers of the Declaration of Independence.

⁸⁸ Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 166.

importance of such an institution to advance its own ideology. While New Side thinking was taught initially at William Tennant's Log College near Philadelphia, another college sought to take its place. This school became known as the College of New Jersey (later to be known as Princeton University, so named by the town in which it was located), and featured a well-known and highly respected headmaster named Reverend John Witherspoon.

When the College of New Jersey was becoming established, few scholars in the colonies could rival the reputation of Old-Sider Francis Alison.⁸⁹ In order to prevent an Old Side domination of the creation of ministers, Benjamin Rush used his influence to hire Witherspoon to the position of President of the college.⁹⁰ Witherspoon, educated at the University of Edinburgh, proved an admirable choice. Taking the job in 1768, Witherspoon served six years of his life in the Continental Congress. Witherspoon proved to be a catalyst for ideas that would have great influence in the debates that formed the basis for American-style republican democracy. In the end, Witherspoon's great contribution to the debate was his ability to channel, rather than create, the great ideas of the age.

Few of Witherspoon's ideological ideas were original, but as an educator and minister, he took care in presenting a view of moral and political philosophy that supported both his personal views and those of the New Side. Many of his uncited references in his lecture notes and sermons contain concepts that are directly borrowed from the Liberal thinkers of the day: Reid, Locke, Hume, and others. Among his primary assertions that differed from the Old Siders is the idea that

⁸⁹ According to the article "Princeton University in the American Revolution," (<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/facts/revolution.html>, accessed 9 September 2008), the College charter was issued to a self-perpetuating board of trustees who were acting in behalf of the evangelical or New Light wing of the Presbyterian Church, but the College had no legal or constitutional identification with that denomination.

⁹⁰ Munroe, *History of the University of Delaware*. Munroe notes that as the Old Side and the New in America were incorrigible enemies, Witherspoon was told; "the one may weaken the other, but they will never strengthen one another's interests." Young Benjamin Rush, urging Witherspoon to accept, showed the virulence of feeling against the Old Side. "Dr. Alison is the only man [in America] who has reputation and scholarship enough for [the Princeton presidency], and who knows but what the Trustees...may proceed imprudently to choose him. How awful would such a step be....He is a man of the most virulent, bitter temper, and has from the beginning of his life showed himself an enemy to vital religion." <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/chapter1.html>.

virtue is the domain of the individual, and should be nurtured by the church.⁹¹ Stated plainly, he contended that individuals are responsible for moral policing, and that religion, not government, was the proper institution for the topics of virtue and vice.⁹² In Witherspoon's view, individual liberty and rights to property led to a sense of industry in behavior, and the promise of reward for personal industry in turn creates national wealth. Thus, in "God's Government," industrious individuals provide for the "greater good" by maximizing themselves as individual sovereigns. In many of his sermons, Witherspoon attacks Hutcheson, the republican philosopher from the University of Glasgow, for making virtue the domain of public action, instead of the domain of private and selfish actions.⁹³ Witherspoon accurately accuses Hutcheson, and by extension Alison and the Old Siders, of regarding the "good of the whole" as the standard for virtue—a position that Witherspoon sees as requiring tyrannical control over "morality" through the replacement of church influence with government rewards and punishments.⁹⁴

New Side teachings centered on individuals. The concepts of virtue and faction, central to the Old/New Side philosophical argument, were focused on the distinction between organizational powers and individual freedoms. Witherspoon viewed the republican position as a real threat to the existence of Presbyterianism. If the government was able to dictate "virtue" through laws favoring the will of a majority in a republican political system that stressed the suppression of faction (a concept in line with Old Sider republican thinkers), Witherspoon the New Side Liberals would have been motivated to influence the emerging American political

⁹¹ Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, *The Works of the Reverend John Witherspoon, Vol 4*. (Philadelphia, PA: William W. Woodrow, 1802). See sermon from July 29, 1775, pages 9-15.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 42.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 384.

⁹⁴ In one of Witherspoon's not-so-subtle critiques, he anonymously published a critique essentially concerning the issues of the schism. Frustrated by Reason's inability to make progress with his Presbyterian opponents, he resorted to ridicule of the republican-minded, majority-centric opposition, by writing what became known as the "Athenian's Creed". In it, he mockingly writes a fictitious creed that opponents of individual rights might take to profess the basis for their position, concluding with "In fine I believe in the divinity of L. S. (Lord Shaftesbury) the saintship of Marcus Antoninus, the perspicuity and sublimity of Aristotle, and the perpetual duration of Mr. Hutcheson's works, notwithstanding their present tendency to oblivion." See David Walker Woods, *John Witherspoon*. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906), 41.

system to allow the continuance of Liberally-informed Presbyterianism. This was a significant part of Witherspoon's educational agenda.

Under the leadership of Witherspoon, the College of New Jersey was not simply a school for New Side-minded Presbyterian ministers. Witherspoon was astute enough to realize that the schism that had interrupted church polity might move into the realm of secular politics, and thus saw his role not just as a minter of ministers, but also as the creator of effective and eloquent advocates for Liberal principles that could operate in the realm of real politics. Just as the New Light factions in Ireland had honed their debating skills in order to persuade their fellow Presbyterians to evolve their dogmatic thinking, so Witherspoon continued this New Side skill set with his students. In his lecture notes, Witherspoon reveals his keenness of making a case to his fellow countrymen: "democracy is the nurse of eloquence, because when the multitude has the power, persuasion is the only way to govern them."⁹⁵ The Reverend Witherspoon was nothing if not eloquent. His lengthy sermons are a curious mix of scripture and politics, with heavy emphasis on arguing points of politics, peppered occasionally with biblical quotes. Witherspoon practiced his teachings concerning persuasion--his political sermons were not fiery condemnations of republicanism and emotional evangelizing of liberal individualism. Many of his political points were of a definite classical liberal slant, communicating his point both by extolling the positions of liberal philosophy and by attacking republican positions in subtle ways.⁹⁶

Although these disagreements and differing syllabi seemed a stark contrast, the reality among common Ulster-Scots in Delaware was something less dramatic. The frequent interchange of Old/New Side preachers exchanging preaching opportunities within congregations

⁹⁵ Rodgers, *The Works of the Reverend John Witherspoon, Vol. 4.*, 438.

⁹⁶ Throughout Witherspoon's sermons, he makes subtle, almost derogatory, references to "ancient free states", referring to the Roman and Greek governments so highly regarded by the republicans. Almost all of Witherspoon's specific examples that he uses of these "ancient" times are examples that show negative outcomes and point out the shortfalls of these classical republican forms of government. Many of his comments point to his concern with corruption in republican history, as it refers to majority tyranny. See Rodgers, *The Works of the Reverend John Witherspoon*, 14, 31-32, 39, 56.

meant that New Castle County Presbyterians were exposed to each ideology on a regular basis. Far from producing divisiveness amongst congregations, the presentation of these various ideas seemed to be taken in stride, and contributed to the atmosphere that was Revolutionary Delaware. Fundamental ideologies were not presented as such to sermon recipients, but concepts were passed on in entertaining and engaging sermons rich with current political discourse. As was the Presbyterian tradition, these ideas were not limited to the pulpit: meetinghouses were sites for fellowship and sharing of ideas that extended beyond the church setting. Frequently, ministers seemed to acquire a sort of celebrity status amongst congregations. Even in Delaware, Witherspoon had achieved a degree of fame. As a new combat veteran of the battle of Princeton, Lieutenant Robert Kirkwood noted in his journal of March 29, 1777 that:

Publick (sic) worship will be performed by the Revd.Dr. Witherspoon tomorrow at the Meetinghouse, all the Troops are to attend precisely at 11 O'clock. The officers to see the men parade exactly at that time, in neat & proper order and be exemplary in their attendance.⁹⁷

Kirkwood did not issue this order to attend the worship service; it is likely that this order was issued for all members of the Continental Army remaining at Princeton. Kirkwood's care in detailing his name, however, indicates a degree of recognition of Witherspoon; there is no indication in his journal that this was viewed by this republican-educated Old Sider that he was to receive a worship service from a foe. On the contrary, it is not out of character for the times for this type of cross-pollination of preaching to occur. It is also highly likely, based on Witherspoon's recorded sermons in this time frame, that his sermon would have been politically charged, and slanted towards emphasizing individual liberties over republican ideals.⁹⁸ It is without doubt that Kirkwood would have known of Witherspoon not just as a famous Presbyterian minister or as the President of the College of New Jersey, but primarily as a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Undoubtedly, the Old Side/New Side squabbles would have held minimal influence on Kirkwood's opinion of Witherspoon. The fact of the matter was that

⁹⁷ Kirkwood, *Journal*, 51.

⁹⁸ In Witherspoon's sermon of June 29, 1775, he begins to lay the groundwork for a struggle against republican ideals in the formation of government. See Rodgers, *The Works of the Reverend John Witherspoon, Vol.1*, 9-15.

Witherspoon was the only Presbyterian minister among the Signers, and would have been regarded with celebrity status within his Presbyterian community.⁹⁹

Despite the Old Side objections to New Side theology on Calvinistic terms, Presbyterians, Old and New, diverged differently, yet harmoniously, from Calvinism on one major point: they rejected Calvin's position that forbade rebellion against Government. Calvin held that those in positions of authority in Government are ordained by God to be in that position, and as such are entitled to respect and obedience. As, in Calvin's view, liberty and a republican constitution are gifts from God, Man, in his depravity, may not demand them—in other words, Christians should not be utopian revolutionaries.¹⁰⁰ Though characterized by some biographers as a strict Calvinist, Witherspoon's actions and words reveal that he thought beyond a slavish devotion to Calvinist thought when it came to changing Government.¹⁰¹ In his lecture *Of Civil Society*, Witherspoon clearly dissents from Calvin, stating that if Government fails to perform in the interests of the people, that the people may “break up the society, recall their obligation, and settle the whole upon a better footing.”¹⁰² This sentiment follows closely with the thought of Witherspoon's personal teacher from the University of Edinburgh, David Hume. Hume, whom Witherspoon cites frequently, posits that should it be perceived that the continued submission to the present government will lead to public ruin, rebellion is proper.¹⁰³

Old Siders also rejected Calvinistic tolerance of and submission to poor governance. One of Alison's mentors, Frances Hutchinson, would have been highly influential in this regard: he

⁹⁹ U.S. Constitution Online: Signers of the Declaration of Independence. <http://www.usconstitution.net/declarsigndata.html>. Accessed 20 December 2008.

¹⁰⁰ Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, *History of Political Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 336, 337.

¹⁰¹ David Walker Woods, *John Witherspoon* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906), 26.

¹⁰² John Rodgers, *The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon* (Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1802) 432.

¹⁰³ Strauss and Cropsey, *History of Political Philosophy*, 552. As an interesting historical aside noted by this monograph's author, much of Hume's philosophy, both epistemological and political, is rooted in the concept of Cause and Effect. In regards to politics, Hume posits that the government exists due to societal requirements: “Cause” is the necessity of a “just” government, and the “Effect” is that governments are created and exist. If government fails to be “just”, then the “Cause” for government ceases. Is it only a coincidence that American colonists referred to the War for Independence as the “Cause”?

promoted the “right of resistance”—positing that humans have the right to defense against private or public tyranny.¹⁰⁴ The men of Alison and McDowell’s Academy took this to heart: according to historian John Munroe, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, as most of these students were, formed a bulwark for the revolutionary movement in the Middle Colonies-- there was hardly a man associated with the academy who was not a rebel.¹⁰⁵

And thus, the young student of McDowell’s, Robert Kirkwood, son of an Ulster-Scot immigrant, who had been brought up attending White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church with both Old and New-Side ministers, and having heard countless politicized sermons and lectures from both Old Side republican ministers and New Side liberal ministers (educated by Witherspoon and others from Princeton) at local meetinghouses, dropped out of college, received his Officer’s commission in the Delaware Continental Regiment, and went off to war. He hated the English, having shared community history and having heard first-hand accounts from his father. He felt that he was on the side of a just cause—he had learned the philosophical arguments that justified rebellion; and, by extension, he had known the republican/liberal debates that lived on past the schism of his church. For the next six years of his life, Robert Kirkwood would walk over 5000 miles, rise to be the Regiment’s commander, and see his Army achieve victory. Robert Kirkwood’s experience is not unique. Robert Kirkwood is the Delaware Continental Regiment.

¹⁰⁴ Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman*, 183.

¹⁰⁵ Munroe, *The University of Delaware: A History*. <http://www.udel.edu/PR/munroe/>

CONCLUSION

Though the ideological concepts of republicanism and liberalism seemed sharply at odds with one another (particularly when taken in the context of a less-than-amicable religious schism), it is possible that the Delaware colonists saw the two concepts not in conflict, but complimentary. They may have conceded that the smallest sovereign entity is the individual, and that the natural rights claimed by both the republican and liberal schools were obvious. But few might agree that a society of selfish and self-centered individuals could thrive, recognizing the inherent evil of human nature as taught in the Presbyterian Church. It may have been the very freedom afforded people in the colonies, given the lack of birthright and title in America, which would have supported individual aspirations that were once denied them in Europe. But the high tide of patriotism would have elevated the ideas held by republicans: the “virtues” held in such high regard in republican thought are only possible when performed by choice—the choice only available to a free individual. Choices made by slavish duty under a tyrant are not virtuous, but can only be so when the duty of service to the Nation is chosen freely by people who look beyond individual gains and sacrifice themselves willingly to the good of society. It is in this sense that American Liberty and Equality coexisted. Despite Old Side/New Side conflicts and the various philosophies that were extant, there would have been an overall sense of community that transcended these conflicts, and allowed the men of the Delaware Regiment a sense of common purpose.

This historical narrative was originally intended to stand on its own solely in that right: to be a contribution to the corpus of work concerning America’s middle colonies, Delaware’s Continental Regiment, or the development of unique American political philosophy. The purely “military” aspect of this monograph is certainly downplayed, intended for use as the backdrop of action that sprung from the development of ideas. Ironically, there are lessons of military value in this narrative for today. In modern conflict, the military aspect has been de-emphasized in order to achieve political ends, often with an emphasis on the importance of “cultural awareness”

necessary to achieve those ends. A part of this awareness is the understanding of trends in ideologies—not simply for its own sake, but to understand the philosophy and motivations that will cause people to act as a result of those ideologies. This monograph has gone into great detail concerning the development of thought and institutions to support those thoughts, but a fair question must be asked, “To what depths must we plunge into ‘cultural awareness’ to make a real difference?” That question cannot be answered cleanly, but to the extent that developing ideologies are delved into, it seems to be the case that, when planning military operations, planners should consider how those ideologies impact how the indigenous peoples regard governance and what an acceptable form of government might look like. Did the British fully understand both their enemies and their allies?

This monograph tells of the historical and ideological backdrop for a specific region and a specific group of people in the American Revolution. Although Delawareans, as American colonists, certainly shared much in common with those in other colonies from various backgrounds, their circumstances were unique—at least as unique as the circumstances of any other region or group in the colonies. As such, a detailed understanding of their motivations, and propensities for a predictable course of action, may have served British planners well. But certainly, the British did know who they were facing, and understood their issues intimately. Many of the British Generals who fought in America had lived there, and some have been criticized as displaying American sympathies, even favoring a strategy that would lead to negotiated settlement rather than one that would produce prompt and tenacious coercion of the colonies.¹⁰⁶ A different strategy, one with an eye on post-conflict governance and peace, may have produced results more favorable to the British—a strategy that would likely have led the British into a security role that would enable Tory loyalists in the colonies to secure a foothold in local governments. For Delaware, the British lost the initiative to secure loyal members of

¹⁰⁶ Kevin P. Phillips, *The Cousin's War* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 291.

government by 1774, and were never able to regain it. But is this idea of enabling Tories in the colonies simply a revisionist dream?

When New Castle County's Presbyterians began their rise to power in 1774, the power base that lost influence was the Tory loyalists. Though patriots were numerous in New Castle County, it is possible that loyalists outnumbered patriots in Delaware.¹⁰⁷ From the time when the Delaware militias began to form in 1775 until following the news of the victory at Saratoga in October 1777, the majority of the colonies remained unoccupied by British forces for almost thirty months.¹⁰⁸ During that time, the rebels were able to further consolidate political power, thus strengthening their position against the Tories that lived among them. Without an actual occupation by Britain, or at least a strong security presence, loyalism could not flourish where rebels controlled the political bodies, the courts, sheriff's offices, et cetera.¹⁰⁹ Areas such as New York, and parts of New Jersey, where a strong British presence existed in the form of garrisoned troops, Toryism flourished.¹¹⁰ Delaware, however, did not have great exposure to actual British troops, except in the periphery: the only skirmish fought on Delaware soil was at Cooch's Bridge in New Castle County, as British troops made their way to Philadelphia in 1777, and British troops in Wilmington, Delaware were hardly enough to empower Tories in the lower counties to take action. Was there something that could have been done on the part of the British to enlist the

¹⁰⁷ Phillips, *The Cousin's War*, 199. Largely Anglican, the Kent and Sussex County loyalists had their beliefs supported by local ministers (as few as they were), who preached loyalty to the Crown, castigating the Revolution as Presbyterian movement. There were also significant numbers of loyalists in New Castle County as well. Captain Enoch Anderson, Delaware Continental Regiment, relays the following anecdote to his nephew:

It was now May, '78. I had frequently gone to New Castle to see my mother...when the coast was clear,--i.e., none of the British men-of-war in the river,--to stay the night there. One of these visits a Tory called me to one side, telling me he wanted to speak to me privately. "You know what I am," said he, "and I know what you are. Well, I have respect for you and all your family,--therefore, for God's sake, sleep no more at your mother's house. Two hundred guineas are offered for you, dead or alive. They will surround you in the night at your mother's--bind you, and send you on to Philadelphia, a prisoner."

I asked him the reason for all this. "Why, because you have cut off all their provisions along the Delaware..." After this warning, I slept no more at my mother's house.

(Enoch Anderson, *Personal Recollections of Captain Enoch Anderson* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 58.

¹⁰⁸ Phillips, *The Cousin's War*, 167.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹¹⁰ Phillips, *The Cousin's War*, 168.

help of Tory loyalists in Delaware to somehow offset the influence of the Presbyterian rebels there?

Pennsylvania Tories argued for years that if the British had landed near Baltimore and proceeded north into York and Lancaster, loyalists there would have risen up to join them.¹¹¹ This is significant, because south central Pennsylvania, where York and Lancaster are located, was the greatest Ulster-Scot stronghold in the American colonies.¹¹² This indication that, in the presence of British security, loyalist would assert themselves against rebellions Scots found its way into unfulfilled strategies: in 1780, a Maryland loyalist named Robert Alexander proposed a plan that identified the enormous dependency of the insurgent armies on the agriculture in Delaware. The proposal called for seizing the Delaware peninsula in order to control the bread baskets of Kent and Sussex counties (among others), where Tory-minded Anglicans abounded.¹¹³ (Later, similar plans were proposed by General Sir Henry Clinton, though never acted upon.) These plans would have potentially provided an avenue for the British to set the conditions for post-conflict governance. Had the British provided adequate security for Tory loyalists to reposition themselves in local government, perhaps the results of the war would be different. But could the British have really provided such a force for security?

It is likely that, had the British employed a strategy to provide security for loyalists in order to empower them to affect governance, the American Revolution would have shifted from a war with a decidedly conventional character to one with a distinctly irregular flavor. Given the history and ideology of the Ulster-Scots, it seems a reasonable hypothesis that British occupation of Delaware would have been resisted. An insurgency in lieu of a conventional fight would have been disastrous for the financially-strapped Great Britain. The cost to defeat an insurgency is high in time, finances, and troops. In modern conflicts, planners used a 10 or 15 to 1 advantage over insurgents to win—that type of ratio is difficult to sustain, and, in a country already in significant

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹¹² Fischer, *Albion's Seed*. See map on page 637 entitled "Settlement Areas of British Borderers."

¹¹³ Phillips, *The Cousin's War*, 138.

war debt, the British Government simply did not want to be bled to death financially.¹¹⁴ In other words, merely providing a presence in order to encourage Tories to take over the reigns of control again would not likely have been successful.

Far from being a revisionist “what if?” scenario, these very real issues faced the British, and they were considered by their leadership. For modern military planners, the context of the Ulster-Scot patriots points out a timeless problem: to what level of detail about an enemy must one have knowledge in order to gain an adequate understanding from which to develop a successful strategy? The challenge that faced British campaign designers in America’s War of Independence is similar to the challenge that American military planners have faced in recent years in Iraq and Afghanistan, namely the problem of post-conflict governance. The British forces, having lost the military conflict, never experienced the opportunity to establish post-conflict governance in the way that the modern American military and other agencies have in recent times. Had the British executed a strategy with a mind for what post-conflict governance should look like, perhaps a combined strategy that leveraged loyalist influence, while simultaneously prosecuting a conventional war, would have provided more acceptable results. However, it would appear that the limited manpower resources of the British precluded any serious consideration of this course of action.

And thus, it is with a view of the vast importance of “understanding your enemy,” that we find the relevance of the context of the Ulster-Scots. Men like Captain Robert Kirkwood are critical to understand, in order to fully appreciate the difficulties that creating a campaign against him entails. Their shared history and ideology shows the way to a clear propensity to rebel, but

¹¹⁴ Headquarters, Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, December 2006, states in paragraph 1-67 that most density recommendations fall within a range of 20 to 25 counterinsurgents for every 1000 residents in an AO (Area of Operations), with 20 counterinsurgents per 1000 residents considered the maximum troop density for effective COIN operations (variable to the situation). Encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761569964/american_revolution.html places the population of the American colonies in 1770 at nearly 2.5 million people. An article by Donald Norman Moran, titled “Soldier of the King”, found at <http://americanrevolution.org/britsol.html> (accessed 27 February 2009), states that the total number of British troops at that time was 45,000—8,500 of which were stationed in North America. If FM 3-24’s troop density ratio of 20 per 1000 were applied to the American Revolution, Britain would have required a force of 50,000—more than existed in the entire British force at the time.

more than that, it shows a propensity to continue rebelling until the end—whatever that might be. Planners of current military operations would do well to fully consider the implications of history and ideology, and their correlating propensities, when creating campaign designs. The case of Delaware’s Ulster-Scots may be evidence that ideas can sometimes prove stronger than even the world’s most powerful military force.

Another key takeaway for modern military planners directly involves post-conflict governance structure: understanding key ideological/political/religious issues that exist in a population can help to define what structure a new government should have. In the case of the American States at the conclusion of the Revolution, the final format of American government contains fine threads of republicanism and liberalism in a way that reflected the thoughts of large population segments. Their influence guided many of the presuppositions that are taken for granted as “self evident” today. It should be plain to see, however, that these conditions—and the ideas that sprung from them—are unique to the American experience, and cannot be strictly duplicated elsewhere. This might not be clear to planners who use U.S. foreign policy as a guide, however.

Current American foreign policy advocates the promotion of democracy, which may present military planners with some fundamental questions about what “democracy” might look like in post-conflict governance.¹¹⁵ Planners should look deeply at local historical and ideological issues in order to craft a governmental structure that closely aligns with the unique circumstances being planned for. The American government was self-styled and American-generated, and thus this high degree of self-determinism aided in the compromise and tolerance of dissimilar, yet oddly compatible, ideological views. American planners aiding in the establishment of

¹¹⁵ For a detailed listing of U.S. foreign policy concerning the promotion of Democracy, see Dr. Walter Gary Sharp Sr.’s book *Democracy and Deterrence: Foundations for an Enduring World Peace* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama: Air University Press, 2008). For a counterpoint to Sharp, see Marina Ottaway’s *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Washington, D.C. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), 2003. Ottaway demonstrates that the term “democracy” can take many forms. She makes the case that some governments that have democratic processes can also exhibit semi-authoritarian qualities. A takeaway for military planners is to understand specific foreign national requirements for governance that account for ideology and history.

governance would be wise to take special care to insure that those being governed feel as though *they* are the ones establishing the principles upon which their government is built. Local ideologies must be acknowledged and respected. A word of caution applies: understanding only ideology is not enough. As a case in point, many of the ideologies resident in colonial America also resided in Great Britain. However, when applied to a unique historical context, the ideologies manifest in differing systems of government at all levels.

Our American experiment in self-governance has survived over two centuries now, amidst a healthy ideological tension that is demonstrated in the Presbyterian rifts in our colonial days—positions well known to the people who fought for independence. Modern planners must be sensitive to this historical lesson: those who are fighting for freedom, whether the version of “freedom” we support or that version that we do not support, share the same characteristics of our own forbearers. Understanding the history and ideology of those fighting for a cause can help show the way to a proper post-conflict end state for which operations must be shaped.

APPENDIX A: Definition of Republicanism

Republicanism:

Republicanism is often cited as the primary influence upon the founding of the United States, with its most prominent modern defenders being Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and J.G.A. Pocock.¹¹⁶ Though sometimes difficult to cleanly define, most adherents to republicanism espoused the following political views:

- That government be controlled from the bottom up; that is to say that an informed and educated populace would elect representatives in a democratic manner
- Civic virtue, as defined by the societies of Greece and Rome, would define the conduct of a citizen
- Human personality became fully developed only through participation in polity¹¹⁷
- A system of checks and balances in government is essential for the staving off of corruption and excesses in power by any group or individual; this is considered a safety measure in the absence of proper “virtue”
- Freehold property and arms were essential if citizens were to engage in meaningful political participation¹¹⁸
- Public liberty (this equates to “right to self-rule”, as distinguished from “independence”)
- The highest virtue is to be subservient to the State; the unselfish sacrifice and denial of personal gain in favor of duty to the greater good of the State
- The teaching of virtue is best left in the hands of the State

Probably one of the most succinct insights into the republican values is offered in a summation by Mark Grimsley, who paraphrases Machiavelli by stating that citizens--those who shall have a political voice in the republic--must possess civic virtue: an ability to see beyond their narrow self-interest to the good of the republic; and commitment to placing the common good above purely personal interest.¹¹⁹ American colonists related to republican ideology through histories of Rome and Athens, the attraction to which

¹¹⁶ See Bernard Bailyn’s *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Gordon Wood’s *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*, and J.G.A. Pocock’s *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* for an excellent overview of the current state of thought on republicanism in early America.

¹¹⁷ Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding*, 27.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. This is seen as a hedge against corruption. The reason for this because if a State is comprised of independent individuals who are armed and landed, the State could adequately defend itself from within its own populace, negating the need for mercenaries.

¹¹⁹ Mark Grimsley, “The American Civil War and Civic Virtue.” Foreign Policy Research Institute, Vol 13, No. 11, November 2008.

cannot be overstated. It is common throughout early American correspondence, newspapers and pamphlets for authors to assume the pseudonym of a famous writer of Greek or Roman times—most likely to add an air of legitimacy to the author’s point.¹²⁰

Republican thought has, at its roots, some of the earliest books on politics: Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics*. Advocating respectively ideas that a *just* state is comprised of people fulfilling their appropriate roles and that monarchs are in their position as a part of natural order, these concepts of republicanism would take on importance in the minds of 18th century colonists and English Whigs alike. Though the concept of “divine right of kings” was challenged, the idea of societal equality appealed to many republicans, drawing the unflattering tag of “Levellers” from their detractors.¹²¹

<http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/1311.200811.grimsley.civilwarcivicvirtue.html> (accessed 16 November 2008).

¹²⁰ One of the most well-known of early American pseudonyms as related to the founding of the United States is that of “Publius”, the name chosen by the authors of *The Federalist Papers* (James Madison, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton), recalls one of the heroes of ancient republicanism, Publius Cornelius Tacitus. Evidence for the reverence of Greek and Roman history and ideals is apparent throughout the Federalist Papers.

¹²¹ For a thorough addressing of the political ideas of the 18th century republicans, or Real Whigs, few books can match Caroline Robbins’ *The Eighteenth-century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959). One of the most interesting insights she provides is her judgment of John Locke, long considered the father of classical liberalism, as a Whig and a republican. This classification illustrates the “bleed over” of ideological concepts of the period. Of most importance to the republican cause, Locke argues against Aristotle to the degree that monarchs are not, by nature, given a right to rule. Though Locke champions the natural rights that would become the backbone of the individualist/liberal ideology, he also does not recommend all-out overthrow of kings. Instead, he delicately appeals to the disaffected to use patience, and to pray to Heaven to one day have a “legislature over them as the majority should approve”. He also adds that “conquest by an unjust war conferred no title to the obedience of the conquered”. Robbins also identifies qualities in Locke’s views on theories of labor that ring of egalitarianism. Though this was probably an unintended philosophical offshoot, it could support claims of republicans than Locke belongs more in their camp than in the liberal camp. See pages 54-63.

APPENDIX B: Definition of Liberalism

Classical Liberalism:

The general concept that man is possessed of certain natural rights is a common philosophical point between republicanism and liberalism. The natural rights most commonly cited are those of life, liberty, and property, famously claimed by John Locke in his *Second Treatise on Government*. Additionally, classical liberalism claims “equality”, to mean that no man has dominion over any other—a concept that is at the center of the divide between the two schools of thought. To the classical liberal, equality and natural rights become the foundation of thought for what the proper relationship between the State and the individual should be. Some common precepts of classical liberalism:

- Man has natural rights of life, liberty, and property in a State of Nature.
- Men bond together in a society under a “Social Contract” to garner protection of natural rights from the usurpation of others
- State’s proper origin is with the will of the people
- State’s primary role is stability, security, and protection of individual rights
- States should not try to foster virtue among the citizenry, or try to promote some organic conception of common good or “virtue”¹²²—it is not the task of government to cultivate the souls of its citizens¹²³
- A central theme from Lockean liberalism is the connection between individual liberty and the right to worship God as one sees fit
- Toleration of differing views is aligned with the concept of not infringing on the individual rights of others
- Unlike classical republicans who saw Man as a political animal by his nature, liberals saw the Natural state of Man as completely free—even from politics
- When individuals pursue “enlightened self-interest” (i.e. matters of self-interest that are not frivolous, such as warring over religious principles), they inadvertently serve the public good by contributing positively to the economy¹²⁴

¹²² Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding*, 14.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

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